

SENATOR BURROWS: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, this amendment would give, at least, another criteria for the State Board of Lands and Funds when it comes to digging new irrigation wells. It merely asks that they minimize the investment in irrigation wells in the State of Nebraska until such time as a comprehensive state water plan has been developed and adopted by the State of Nebraska. We have had wells going down, at least some reports, that possibly are going down in areas competitive to existing water supplies and certainly this should be a primary consideration that the state doesn't invest its money in state owned wells in competition for that water that presently farmers may be looking to for their livelihood. I tremendously object to seeing the state dollars invested in drilling irrigation wells in the first place when we are going into a land retirement program for the rest of the farmers in the state and probably approximately the total production of corn in the state is going to be limited in the next few years to a total amount and any increased production we get out of these wells will probably come out of another farmer's pocket. A few years ago when they started advancing the drilling of these wells, we had \$3.00, \$3.50 a bushel corn and it was a lucrative thing. They got a quick return in two or three years across the state and I think the state ought to be realistic that now the price of corn is below the cost of production, and to invest state monies directly into competition with existing agriculture is a foolish move. I do hope that the Legislature will look seriously at this amendment and give the State Board of Lands and Funds another criteria where at least they will take a more serious look before they put more dollars into irrigation. If it were any other business segment besides agriculture that the state was going into direct competition and taking funds, and these funds that go into drilling these wells are coming directly out of the property tax funds or replacement funds for property taxes across in the school districts of the State of Nebraska. I think the issue is rather simple. Should we put another criteria in or not and I would certainly ask the Legislature to look seriously at this amendment to at least give the State Board of Lands and Funds, their present criteria is only that of profit to the School Lands and Funds over a period of years. I think they should also take into consideration that they are going into competition with agriculture and look seriously at it in each and every investment they make and keep this money back replacing property taxes to the schools in the State of Nebraska directly year by year. I move the amendment be adopted. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Shirley Marsh.

SENATOR MARSH: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose this amendment for the following reasons. You are asking this one segment to have an extra lariat to be tied down, not what is best for the State of Nebraska, but an added hurdle. This is a money making proposition for the schools for the State of Nebraska. That would be their criteria now for making a decision whether to utilize irrigation procedures or not. Statistics have proved that when they have used irrigation it has materially resulted